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Hoses designed for use in consumer applications must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the demands of consumer pressure washers. The prior art has not provided a satisfactory flexible thermoplastic pressure-washer hose that is designed to operate at pressures greater than about 2000 psi, with the 300% safety margin conventionally required. Thus, such hoses are unsuitable for higher pressure applications, wherein the pressure generated by the pressure washer exceeds about 2000 psi. The

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In light of the foregoing problems in the art, there exists a need for a flexible inexpensive pressure-washer hose that will accommodate higher pressures than conventionally attainable with known pressure washer hoses while maintaining the margin of safety required for consumer pressure washers.

35 It is a general object of the invention to provide a high-pressure thermoplastic hose capable of attaining an operating pressure of at least about 2000 psi, and

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FIG. 2 is an enlarged side elevational view, partially
35 cut away, of the high-pressure hose of the pressure washer
shown in Fig. 1.

FIG. 3 is an enlarged cross-section taken in the plane of line 3-3 in Fig. 2.

FIG. 4 is a plan view of the hose shown in Fig. 2 when the hose is bent through an angle of 180°.

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While the invention is susceptible of various modifications and alternative constructions, certain illustrated embodiments thereof has been shown in the drawings and will be described below in detail. It should be understood, however, that there is no intention to limit the invention to the specific forms disclosed, but on the contrary, the intention is to cover all modifications, alternative constructions and equivalents falling within the spirit and scope of the invention.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring now to Fig. 1, the pressure washer of the invention, shown generally at 10, is of generally conventional configuration and comprises a pump 11 fluidically connected to an operator wand 12 via a high-pressure fluid transfer hose 14. The fluid used in the pressure-washer typically is water, optionally mixed with a washing fluid such as a liquid soap. Fluid is fed from the pump 11, which typically is connected to a water line for generation of a continuous stream of pressurized water. Upon leaving the pump 11, the pressurized cleaning fluid travels through the hose 14 to the operator wand 12. The operator wand 12 typically includes a nozzle ¹³~~15~~ and trigger valve 13 for allowing an operator to controllably direct a stream of the pressurized fluid towards a substrate for washing. The hose, wand, and fluid source each may be provided with conventional fittings and couplings to effect appropriate fluid-tight connections therebetween. The hose 14, as depicted in Fig. 2, in this instance is of concentric laminar construction, and includes a central core 15, a reinforcing sheath 16, and an outer jacket 17.

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In accordance with the invention, the core 15 is composed of a flexible material, which is preferably a polymeric material and which is capable of accommodating cleaning fluid of pressures of at least about 8000 psi while maintaining a high degree of flexibility when fluid is not in the hose. Materials suitable for use in conjunction with the core are numerous, and include, for example, high tensile strength thermoplastic elastomers such as those of the SANTOPRENE® family of thermoplastic rubbers. The SANTOPRENE® elastomers having a tensile strength of at least about 14 MPa and a tear strength of at least about 40 kN/m at 25°C.

The invention is not limited to the foregoing thermoplastic elastomers, and indeed any material having suitable flexibility and strength can be used in conjunction with the invention. For example, other materials suitable for use in formulating the core include rigid polymers, such as polyvinylchloride and copolymer of polyvinylchloride with other suitable polymers, which rigid polymers are conventionally employed in less flexible high-pressure hoses. To render such materials sufficiently flexible for use in conjunction with pressure-washing applications, the rigid polymer is blended with a plasticizer in an amount effective to impart sufficient flexibility to the rigid polymer such that the finished hose has the flexibility desired. When formulating a core material, the rigid polymer is preferably present in the core material in an amount ranging from about 40% to about 60% by weight, and the plasticizer is preferably present in an amount ranging from about 20% to about 40% by weight. The core may include other materials, such as stabilizers, modifiers, and other ingredients as would be within the ordinary skill in the art.

When the core is constructed of materials such as polyvinylchloride or strong thermoplastic elastomers, it will be capable of accommodating hot pressurized aqueous washing fluids, and most preferably water. For pressure

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20 To prevent damage to the braided layer and to render
the hose resistant to abrasion during use, the hose is
provided with a jacket layer 17 made of an abrasion-
resistant flexible material. The jacket material may be
similar or dissimilar to the core material, and thus, for
25 example, the jacket layer may comprise a SANTOPRENE® rubber
or a plasticized rigid polymer as described more fully
hereinabove. The jacket preferably has a thickness of
about 1.0 to about 1.2 mm. The jacket preferably is
adhesively secured to the braided sheath with sufficient
30 adhesive to impart adhesion between the jacket and the
sheath, preferably sufficient to provide an adhesive
strength sufficient to prevent separation between the
jacket and sheath when the hose is bent. The adhesive is
preferably similar or identical to that used to adhesively
35 connect the sheath and core.

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mm. The minimum bend radius may be determined by bending the hose with no fluid contained therein over an angle of 180° and by reducing the size of the bend to as small a diameter as possible without kinking the hose, as shown, for example, in Fig. 4. The minimum bend radius 25 of the hose 14 may be defined as the distance between the central bend line 26 of the bent portion of the hose and the center of the hose, the distance being measured along an angle normal to the bend line 26. Surprisingly, by incorporating a flexible material in the core of the hose of the present invention, a high-pressure hose having a minimum bend radius no greater than about 38 mm while maintaining the ability to accommodate high pressures may be provided. In preferred embodiments, the invention provides a hose that has a minimum bend radius no greater than about 36 mm. More preferably, the minimum bend radius is no greater than about 34 mm, and even more preferably, the minimum bend radius is no greater than about 32 mm. The high-pressure hose of the invention will thus be sufficiently flexible for use in consumer pressure washing applications.

For use in consumer applications, the hose will be provided with a hose rating sufficiently below the burst pressure of the hose to leave a 300% margin of safety between the rated pressure and the burst pressure. The burst pressure of the hose is the gauge pressure that the hose will accommodate before bursting. Thus, for example, a hose with a hose rating of 2000 psi will have a burst pressure of at least about 8000 psi, it being understood that the hose will accommodate pressures of at least 8000 psi, and possibly higher pressures, before bursting. Preferably, the hose of the invention has a burst pressure of at least about 8000 psi. More preferably, the hose has a burst pressure of at least about 9000 psi, even more preferably, the burst pressure is at least about 10,400 psi, and most preferably the burst pressure is at least about 12,000 psi.

To ensure the structural integrity of the hose, the hose should have a minimum impulse value of at least about 10,000 cycles, more preferably, at least about 20,000 cycles, and most preferably, at least about 30,000 cycles.

5 The impulse value is conventionally defined and refers to the number of cycles for which the hose may be pressurized to its hose rating (i.e., 25% of the burst pressure) and reduced to zero gauge pressure before failure of the hose, each pressurization and depressurization constituting one

10 cycle. The impulse test and equipment for conducting the impulse test are well known in the art.

Most preferably, the hose of the invention is substantially non-deforming, such that the dimensions of the hose do not change when the pressure washer is operated

15 at its rated pressure (i.e., 25% of the burst pressure). In preferred embodiments, the hose of the invention preferably has an elongation at its rated pressure of no more than about 5%, and preferably no more than about 3%. Most preferably, the volumetric expansion of the hose at

20 the rated pressure preferably is no more than about 4.0 cc/ft., more preferably, no more than about 3.8 cc/ft., and most preferably, no more than about 3.5 cc/ft.

The following examples are provided to illustrate the present invention, and should not be construed as limiting

25 in scope.

Example 1

A high-pressure hose is provided. The hose comprises a core composed of polyvinylchloride and a plasticizer in an amount effective to impart flexibility to the

30 polyvinylchloride. The core layer further includes a sulfate-based coprecipitate stabilizer, such as an INTERSTAB stabilizer in an amount sufficient to stabilize the core material. The core may include any suitable rigid polymer, such as EVIPOL polymers and SPVC polymers. If

35 desired, a modifier such as CHEMIGUM may be included in an amount suitable to impart a modified property to the core, for example, an amount of from about 5% to about 15% by

The plasticized polyvinylchloride is extruded through an annular die to form a thermoplastic hose having an inner diameter of about 6.4 mm and an outer diameter ranging from about 12 to about 13 mm. Over the extruded core is braided a high-tenacity polyester filament yarn. The yarn is braided with a braid angle of 1.41 over a layer of adhesive disposed on the core to provide an adhesive bond between the inner core and braided sheath. An outer jacket is applied over the sheath.

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A high-pressure hose is provided in accordance with the teachings of Example 1, except that the inner core and jacket layer each comprise a SANTOPRENE® thermoplastic rubber. The hose thus formed has a minimum burst strength of 12,000 psi, a minimum impulse value greater than 30,000 cycles, an elongation at rated pressure (3000 psi) of 3%, and a volumetric expansion of about 3.5 ± 5 cc/ft at the rated pressure.

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